29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

* 797
291
● 759
346

Photo: Fr. F. Spetmeier

Sister Infirmarian gives an injection at Detwok

[facing p 117]

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

advantage of the superiority that the mission education gave them over their fellows, for one became a doctor; not, alas! one of the medical variety, but a witch doctor, and the other, rejoicing in his knowledge of writing and arithmetic, tried to forge a paysheet, and now languishes in Malakal Gaol.

To the Shilluk, the foreigner and all his works were of little or no interest, unless he could see some immediate personal benefit to himself. The missionary was a person whom he hoped to touch for a piastre or a pipeful of tobacco; the mission was a place where those good, but queer, women, the Sisters ('*Thwore*'—an attempt at the Italian '*Suore*'—as he called them), could be relied upon to produce a remedy for his tummyache, a bandage for his sores and a soothing medicine for his rheumy eyes. So, too, education meant nothing to him. The mission school did not mean a place where his children could learn to read and write, but rather a convenient nursery and boarding house where offspring could be dumped during the periods when food was short in the village, and in the rainy season when parents were busy about the all-important business of planting and were only too glad to have their infants out of the way and from under their feet. They knew that in the mission the child would be well fed and housed, would even be given a yard or so of white cloth to wear and a blanket in which to roll himself at night. And when the rains were over and the grain baskets once more full, he could promptly be recalled to the family hearth, to attend to the domestic chores of minding the baby or tending the herd of goats and sheep.

The boys, too, who did condescend to attend the school, were for the most part not particularly worried about their academic advancement. They came because it was a novelty for them; it was a change from the life of the cattle camp and the village; from the milking of cows and the herding of goats and the nursing of squalling babies. They came also because of the amenities the status of a scholar offered to them; the resplendent white cloth with which to cover their